

# Bedford-Union Armory Community Newsletter

## Local Community Leaders Confront Youth Violence

In November, Bedford Courts organized the Crown Heights Youth Against Violence Conference at The Brooklyn Children's Museum. The discussion was led by community youth, local leaders and anti-violence professionals who work to raise awareness about positive ways to prevent violence in schools and neighborhoods. Bedford Courts understands the tremendous opportunity we have been given to



Guest panelists at Youth Against Violence Conference.

provide a meaningful and positive impact in the lives of the youth in Crown Heights. By working with the local community we believe the recreational facility can be a place which echoes the cultural values of Crown Heights through sports, education and recreational programs.

The program opened with words from District Leader Geoffrey E. Davis

whose organization, James E. Davis Stop Violence Foundation, has been serving the community for decades. Caple G. Spence, Executive Director of the Local Development Corporation of Crown Heights, spoke about his commitment to empowering the community and local youth. Both speakers were event co-hosts along with The First Baptist Church of Crown Heights. In addition, the local 71st precinct's Neighborhood Coordination Officers Frank Bulzoni and his team shared about new initiatives to strengthen community relationships. The opening culminated with special guest speaker DJ Envy, of The Breakfast Club Power 105.1, who shared about his challenges and lessons he learned growing up.

Following the speakers, an anticipated panel discussion, moderated by DJ Envy, featured Annika McInnis & Christian Waterman, Founders of BlackMarketWares and members of First Baptist Church; Dena Gorkin, Director of Community Education NCFJE's Operation Survival & Founder and Principal of Bnos Chomesh; Andrew Mitchell, Director of Man UP! Inc.; and Coach Carlton Screen, Founder of Flatbush Youth Association. Panelists spoke about their organization's impact on the community and emphasized the need for a positive place for young people to go where they could explore new interests and be surrounded by people that care about their well-being.

Yet, the highlight of the conference was feedback received directly from the youth of various community organizations including Save Our Streets and Crown Heights Youth Collectives. They created idea trees and shared personal stories about what helps them make positive choices and listed activities they hoped that the Bedford-Union Armory would provide. The event was a big success with music, pizza and sodas sponsored by Top-Pop.

To close the conference, Councilwoman Laurie C. Cumbo shared about her experience as an elected official and her role in working with other elected to ensure the Bedford-Union Armory benefits the greater community of Crown Heights and particularly the youth.

Bedford Courts intend to continue to partner with local leaders and stakeholders to offer events like these in the future. If you have an idea for a future event or would like to partner with us please contact us at [info@bedfordcourts.com](mailto:info@bedfordcourts.com).



The Award Winning Step Team at one of Camba's 12 Community Centers

## Spotlight on CAMBA

Since 1977, CAMBA has helped New Yorkers transform their lives by providing holistic programs to individuals, families and communities. Today, CAMBA's comprehensive network of 160 programs operating from over 80 locations throughout the five boroughs reach 45,000 New Yorkers annually. CAMBA takes a holistic approach to families, and operates multi-generational programming at 12 community centers throughout Brooklyn, including 9 in NYCHA developments and 3 in schools. More than half of CAMBA's clients are immigrants and refugees from around the globe, and more than 10,000 are children.

CAMBA owns and oversees management for residential buildings throughout Brooklyn, and took over maintenance and operations of the Bedstuy Multi-Service Center in 2012, revitalizing the decaying building with major renovations. Today, the five-story, 150,000 square foot facility houses 13 non-profit agencies, an active event space, and a school. Camba will take on a similar role at the Armory by overseeing the management of the 60,000 SF recreational facility, the 25,000 SF of affordable office space and the 500-person flexible community meeting space.

CAMBA's success is attributed to their dedicated staff of over 1,600, who represent the communities we serve. **89%** of staff are people of color; **15%** are former CAMBA clients with intimate knowledge of the issues their current clients face; and **25%** speak a language other than English, accounting for **35** different languages.

Learn more about CAMBA's 40 years of building an inclusive New York City at [www.camba.org](http://www.camba.org).

## Imagine Swim—A Feel Good Story

Not many kids return from vacation able to say “I rescued my cousin,” when asked about their summer break—but that’s exactly what our newest Imagine All-Star Nairobi, a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader at Brooklyn Arts and Science Elementary School, did while swimming in Morocco with friends and family. Nairobi was playing with her 4-year-old cousin in a pool with a large shallow end and a sudden, steep drop-off into the deep end. Her cousin was warned repeatedly by the adults not to venture away from the shallow end, as he didn’t know how to swim.



At next glance, the adults saw Nairobi calmly swimming back from the deep end to the shallow side, with her young cousin clutching onto her neck. We cannot stress the importance of keen supervision when children are in the water—Nairobi’s cousin was fine, just a little scared, but not as scared as the adults on deck. With Nairobi’s presence, vigilance, and comfort in the water, her young cousin was kept safe out of harm’s way. When congratulated by Team Imagine for her actions at the pool, Nairobi accepted the words with a shoulder shrug and a grin. May this essential life skill come as easily to all our Imagine swimmers—we’re so proud of Nairobi!

Nairobi swims at Bowling Green with Imagine instructor David Hernandez, who had this to say about our pint-sized hero: “Nairobi is a free-spirited, fun-loving girl. She always comes in with a smile, and is concerned about the other kids, staying in a group, and doing things together. Watching her grow as a person and become the heroic young girl she is has been such a pleasure. She’s the best!”

Imagine Swim is a potential operator for the 6 lane, 25 meter pool. As the operator, Imagine will maintain the pool and also provided swim classes for children and adults, open lap swim and other swim fitness opportunities.

## Welcoming the West Indian American Day Carnival Association

The West Indian American Day Carnival Association (WIADCA) and BFC Partners have announced that WIADCA will establish its new headquarters in affordable office space at the revitalized Bedford-Union Armory. The new office will provide a much-needed permanent home for WIADCA, a non-profit that has been part of the Crown Heights community for nearly 50 years and organizes the annual West Indian American Day Parade.

As part of its ongoing community engagement efforts, BFC Partners worked closely with WIADCA on a plan to lease the new office at an extremely affordable rate. The low cost of this 3,500-square-foot space will allow WIADCA to continue promoting Caribbean culture, arts and history through year-round programming.

“Securing a permanent home for West Indian cultural leadership is a huge victory for our Crown Heights community,” said WIADCA President William Howard in his announcement. “Our community looks forward to the day when we can begin preparing for the West Indian American Day Parade at a brand new office in the Bedford-Union Armory.”



WIADCA is just one of many local community organizations that will find a home in approximately 25,000 square feet of total office space at the new Armory, all of which will be leased below market rates for community facility use. BFC Partners is actively involved in discussions with other community groups to provide more of the affordable office space Crown Heights needs and deserves.

### HireNYC Info Sessions Begin

On Wednesday, December 7, 2016, the first HireNYC Info Session was held at the Community Board 9 office. At this meeting, local service providers met with staff from the NYC Economic Development Corporation, NYC Small Business Services, Workforce1, the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development, and the Bedford Courts team to learn more about HireNYC and how it applies to Bedford Courts and other projects of the city.

During the event participants learned more about HireNYC requirements for permanent and construction jobs on site and how to make referrals to Workforce1, both for Bedford Courts when construction begins as well as immediately for persons currently serviced by each service provider. The discussion broadened to construction work readiness, including referrals to OSHA-10 and scaffolding certification and obtaining a security guard license, all at reduced cost or no cost. Representatives from Community Board 9—Musa Moore, Board Chair and Pia Raymond, Economic Development Committee Chair—were also in attendance as well representatives from several local elected officials.

Other info sessions will be scheduled in the future, allowing for more service providers to learn about HireNYC and Workforce1, and how to make employment referrals now and when construction begins at Bedford Courts.

Link for HireNYC:  
<http://www.nycedc.com/program/hirenyc>

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